

SIERRA NEVADA-CASCADE (SNC) CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSITION 50

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

March 15, 2006 (FAQs are continuously updated)

FISCAL

- F1. Q. How much is available in the first round?
- A. \$15.8 million (\$4.15 million appropriated for FY 04/05, plus \$11.65 million appropriated in FY 05/06) is currently available. An additional \$11.65 million is included in the Governor's Proposed FY 06/07 Budget.
- F2. Q. What are the minimum and maximum amounts that will be awarded per individual grants?
- A. No minimum or maximum amounts have been established.
- F3. Q. According to the guidelines, a project involving the acquisition of property purchased in excess of the Fair Market Value (FMV) would be considered an ineligible project. Could it be considered an eligible project, if the grantee found the means to cover the amount in excess of FMV?
- A. No. The State will participate in acquisitions that can be purchased at the approved Fair Market Value as determined by the Department of General Services.
- F4. Q. Is it true the first \$15.8 million to be awarded must be expended within the next two fiscal years, while the second \$11.65 million to be awarded must be expended within the next three fiscal years?
- A. Appropriations pursuant to this grant program have three years to be encumbered in a Grant Agreement and an additional two years to be expended and the project completed. For the \$4.15 million appropriated in FY 04/05, Grant Agreements will need to be in place by June 30, 2007 and all funds expended by June 30, 2009. For the \$11.65 million appropriated in FY 05/06, monies will need to be encumbered by June 30, 2008 and spent by June 30, 2010.
- F5. Q. Are costs directly related to the grant project, but incurred prior to the project award date eligible for reimbursement?
- A. No. Costs must be incurred during the Project Performance Period to be eligible.



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- F6. Q. Can we use an overhead rate for personnel and/or employee services?
- A. No. Only direct Acquisition-related costs are eligible expenses. Costs must be directly tracked to a specific purpose, project and/or employee with supporting timesheets. Rates can only be used when determining eligible staff benefits. Direct staff and/or consultant costs are limited up to a maximum of \$10,000 per project.
- F7. Q. Are matching funds required and how does it impact scoring?
- A. No. Matching Funds are not required. However, projects that include Other Sources of Funds may be more competitive and could receive up to five additional points in their score.
- F8. Q. Can management costs of a project be categorized as in-kind funding for the matching funds requirement?
- A. Please note that this grant program does not require matching funds. However, as noted in the answer to question F7 above, projects including Other Sources of Funds could receive additional scoring points and be more competitive. Management costs may be considered Other Sources of Funds if the management costs are directly related to the project and not classified as overhead costs.

PROGRAM

- P1. Q. What is the Project Performance Period?
- A. The beginning and end dates of the grant agreement. Eligible costs incurred during this time can be funded with grant funds.
- P2. Q. Can Federal or State Agencies apply for a grant?
- A. No. For this grant program, only local public agencies, local public water districts and Nonprofit Organizations may apply.
- P3. Q. Does CEQA need to be completed prior to submitting a grant application?
- A. No. However, at a minimum, either a Notice of Exemption stamped by the County Clerk or, as appropriate, an Initial Study covering the project with a plan for how CEQA will be completed within one year of the grant agreement must be submitted.



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- P4. Q. My organization has several eligible projects that we feel are competitive. Should we submit one application for all projects, or individual applications for each?
- A. Submit one application for each project, as each project (Acquisition) will be evaluated and scored by the Resources Agency Technical Committee on an individual basis.
- P5. Q. Will I be penalized for submitting more than one application?
- A. No. Each project will be evaluated and scored by the Resources Agency Technical Committee on its own merit.
- P6. Q. If we meet one statutory purpose, can we get additional points if other statutory purposes are met as well?
- A. No. There are a maximum of 50 points in this category. If, by meeting other purposes, it enhances the quality of the Acquisition, scoring may be impacted in other areas.
- P7. Q. How will you determine whether or not you are going to schedule a site visit?
- A. We anticipate visiting all projects making the semi-finalist list. Whether or not your project makes the semi-finalist list will depend on the number of applications received, each project's overall score, requested funding amounts, etc.
- P8. Q. Will the application go forward for review without a letter from the willing seller?
- A. No. An application must include a letter from the willing seller that clearly indicates he/she is willing to enter into an agreement for the sale of their real property should grant funds become available.
- P9. Q. If my project satisfies multiple (or all four) Statutory Purposes, how can I answer all the questions on only eight pages?
- A. Choose the one statutory purpose that best fits the project. Use the Multiple Environmental Benefits Section (under Statewide Resource Priorities, page 9) to discuss the other benefits to be derived from the project.



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- P10. Q. Can you elaborate on disadvantaged community, e.g., how close or how far away from the project site must a disadvantaged community be in order to take advantage of the extra evaluation points.
- A. As described in Appendix M, “Disadvantaged Community” means a Community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income (\$37,994). In the context of your question, “Disadvantaged Community” refers to the community that benefits directly from the goals of the Acquisition.
- P11. Q. Would a grazing permit on federal lands be an eligible Acquisition?
- A. A Federal grazing permit is a permit for the use of Federal land. A Federal grazing permit is not an interest or rights in the lands itself. Therefore, it would not be eligible for grant funding based on the definition of an Acquisition used for this program.
- P12. Q. What about the purchase of in-stream mining rights?
- A. According to the Department of Conservation, there are no “in-stream mining rights,” just mining permits given to miners by local jurisdictions. Mining permits are land use permissions rather than interests or rights in the property or water where the mine is located. Therefore, in-stream mining permits would not be eligible based on the definition of an Acquisition used for this program.
- P13. Q. Will non-profits or local agencies that acquire land/water be allowed to transfer the title to an appropriate State or Federal Agency (e.g., USFS, Parks or Fish & Game)?
- A. Yes.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

- A1. Q. When are the grant applications due and awards announced?
- A. Grant applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 12, 2006. Awards are anticipated by June or July 2006.
- A2. Q. Will you accept applications submitted electronically?
- A. No. Only hard copies of the application will be accepted.

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- A3. Q. I cannot secure some of the assessor's parcel maps, legal descriptions or restrictions/encumbrances for all of the parcels to be acquired with grant funds. How should I proceed?
- A. Assemble all of the documentation you have been able to secure, and then describe the process you have followed to accurately identify all parcels to be acquired in the project.
- A4. Q. What is the composition of the Resources Agency Technical Committee who will be evaluating the grant applications?
- A. The Resources Agency Technical Committee is comprised of a multidisciplinary team from various State Agencies with expertise in acquisitions, wildlife biology-habitat, water quality and water rights. The committee will be evaluating the applications as a team.
- A5. Q. The information requested for "Restriction/Easements" (copies of any easements, mineral rights, Williamson Act Contract or other conditions that may affect the proposed parcel) would necessitate a complete title search of the property. This could be costly and would require a great deal of time to complete, especially those properties that have a long list of easements. Is there a way we can simplify the process?
- A. Disclosure of all known restrictions and easements is all that is required in completing the application.

